

Application No. 09/675,851
Amdt dated August 13, 2004
Reply to Office action of June 30, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Original) A surgical instrument, comprising:
a handle assembly;
an end effector carried by the handle assembly and operable by
the handle assembly;
a first handle included in the handle assembly;
a second handle included in the handle assembly and pivotal on
the first handle at a fulcrum;
10 a female bayonet fitting disposed at the fulcrum on the first handle;
male bayonet fitting disposed at the fulcrum on the second handle;
the female bayonet fitting and the male bayonet fitting having a first
relative position permitting assembly and disassembly of the first handle and the
second handle, and a second relative position permitting pivotal movement of the first
15 handle relative to the second handle to facilitate operation of the end effector.

2. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 1, wherein:
the handle assembly has an open position and a closed position;
and
the first relative position is in proximity to the open position.

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~~3~~ 3. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 2, wherein:
the second relative position is disposed between the open position
and the closed position.

~~4~~ 4. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 1, wherein:
the female bayonet fitting includes first portions defining a whole
and including a pair of first opposing flanges extending radially inwardly of the whole;
the male bayonet fitting includes second portions defining a
cylinder and including a pair of second opposing flanges extending radially outwardly
between the pair of first opposing flanges in the first relative position.

~~5~~ 5. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 1, further
comprising:
means disposed on the handle assembly for inhibiting relative
movement of the female bayonet fitting and the male bayonet fitting from the second
relative position to the first relative position.

~~6~~ 6. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 5 wherein the
inhibiting means comprises a pin fixed to the female bayonet fitting to inhibit pivotal
movement of the male bayonet fitting to the first relative position.

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7. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 6 wherein the pin is removable from the female bayonet fitting to permit movement of the male bayonet fitting to the first relative position and thereby facilitate disassembly of the handle assembly.

8. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 1 wherein the handle assembly is machined to form the female bayonet fitting and the male bayonet fitting.

9. (Original) The surgical instrument, comprising:
a handle assembly;
an end effector carried by the handle assembly and operable by
5 the handle assembly;
a pair of handles included in the handle assembly and being pivotal
relative to each other at a fulcrum which divides the handle assembly into a proximal
end and a distal end;
a pair of finger rings included in the proximal end of the handle
10 assembly.

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a pair of handle bars included in the proximal end of the handle assembly, each of the handle bars extending more than one-half the distance between the fulcrum and an associated one of the finger rings.

15 the handle bars being disposed relative to each other to intersect at an imaginary apex other than the fulcrum.

10 10. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 9, further comprising:

at least one ridge formed along one of the handle bars to facilitate finger placement when the instrument is palmed by a user.

11 11. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 9, wherein: the handle bars are disposed relative to each other to define a first angle at the imaginary apex when the handle bars are in a closed position and to define a second angle at the imaginary apex when the handle bars are in an opened position.

12 12. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 11 wherein the imaginary apex moves proximately as the handle bars move from the closed position toward the opened position.

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13 13. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 12 wherein the imaginary apex is disposed distally of the fulcrum, in both the opened position and the closed position.

14 14. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 9, further comprising:

a bayonet coupling disposed at the fulcrum and permitting pivotal movement of the handles at the fulcrum.

15 15. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 9 wherein: the handles have an intermediation disposed between the proximal end and the distal end; and

the handles at the intermediate section have a cross sectional area less than that of the proximal end and the distal end.

Claims 16 – 34 (Canceled without prejudice or disclaimer).

16 16. (Original) A surgical instrument, comprising:
A non-disposable portion including a handle assembly with arms having first alignment characteristics;

5 a disposable portion carried by the handle assembly and including
end effectors with second alignment characteristics;

the end effectors being disposed relative to the arms and having a floating relationship with the arms; whereby

the second alignment characteristics of the end effectors are

10 independent of the first alignment characteristics of the arms.

14

17 36. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 35, wherein:

The non-disposable portion includes a fulcrum and;

the disposable portion is releasably attached to the non-disposable portion at the fulcrum.

17 37. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 36 wherein the end effectors are disposed between the arms.

15 38. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 35, wherein:
the end effectors include a first end effector and a second effector
cooperating with the first end effector to produce an end effect; and
the first end effector having a pivotal relationship with the second
end effector.

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20 39. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 38, wherein:
the fulcrum of the non-disposable portion is a first fulcrum; and
the first end effector pivots relative to the second end effector at a
second fulcrum. 19

21 40. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 39, wherein the
first fulcrum is different from the second fulcrum. 20

22 41. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 40, wherein the
first fulcrum is spaced from the second fulcrum. 21

23 42. (Original) The surgical instrument recited in Claim 41, wherein the
first fulcrum has a first axis and the second fulcrum has a second axis different than the
first axis. 22